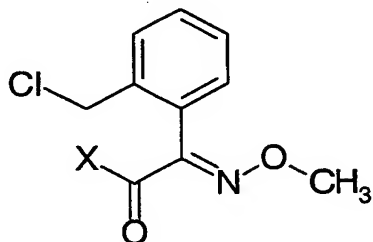
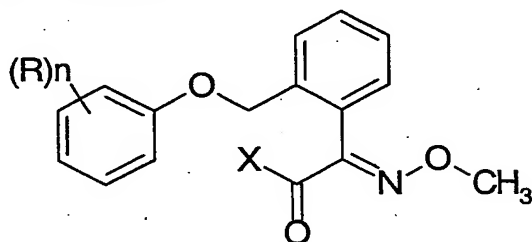


We claim:

1. A process for preparing 2-(chloromethyl)phenylacetic acid derivatives of the formula I,



where X is $\text{C}_1\text{-C}_4$ -alkoxy or methylamino, by ether cleavage of compounds of the formula II,



where R is $\text{C}_1\text{-C}_4$ -alkyl, $\text{C}_1\text{-C}_4$ -alkoxy, $\text{C}_1\text{-C}_2$ -haloalkyl, $\text{C}_1\text{-C}_4$ -alkylcarbonyl, $\text{C}_1\text{-C}_4$ -alkylcarbonyloxy, halogen, nitro or cyano and X is as defined above, which comprises carrying out the reaction in the presence of hydrogen chloride and an inert solvent, and adding a catalyst to the reaction mixture selected from the group consisting of iron, indium and halides, oxides and triflates thereof.

2. A process as claimed in claim 1, wherein the catalyst used is iron(III) chloride.
3. A process as claimed in claim 1 or 2, wherein the catalyst is used in a concentration of from 0.001 to 0.5 mol equivalents.
4. A process as claimed in any of claims 1 to 3, wherein from 1 to 25 mol equivalents of hydrogen chloride are used.
5. A process as claimed in any of claims 1 to 4, wherein the inert solvent used is an aromatic or aliphatic, optionally halogenated hydrocarbon.

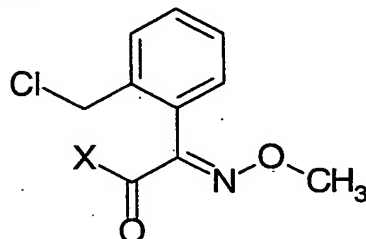
Preparation of 2-(chloromethyl)phenylacetic acid derivatives

Abstract

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A process for preparing 2-(chloromethyl)phenylacetic acid derivatives of the formula I,

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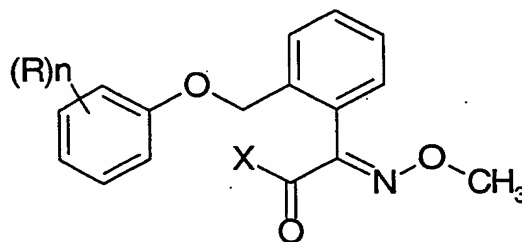


I

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where X is C₁-C₄-alkoxy or methylamino, by ether cleavage of compounds of the formula II,

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II

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where R is C₁-C₄-alkyl, C₁-C₄-alkoxy, C₁-C₂-haloalkyl, C₁-C₄-alkylcarbonyl, C₁-C₄-alkylcarbonyloxy, halogen, nitro or cyano and X is as defined above comprises carrying out the reaction in the presence of hydrogen chloride and an inert solvent, and adding a catalyst to the reaction mixture selected from the group consisting of iron, indium and halides, oxides and triflates thereof.

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